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## DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY STAFF IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN IMO STATE.

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# **DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND JOB PERFORMANCE OF LIBRARY STAFF IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN IMO STATE.**

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## **Abstract**

The paper examined disciplinary measures and job performance of library staff in academic libraries in Imo State. It was guided by five objectives of the study. The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is thirty (34) Heads of Departments in the five academic libraries studied. The instrument for data collection was an online questionnaire rated using the four-point scale. Out of the 34 copies of instrument sent, 28 were returned showing 82% return rate. Data generated from the study were analyzed using mean (x) scores. Findings of the study revealed that; indiscipline practices carried out to high extent in the libraries studied are lateness, absenteeism from work and insubordination, causes of indiscipline in the libraries are poor working condition irregular payment of salaries, incompetent leadership, natural tendency to flout laws, lack of upward communication, wrong placement of staff, laxity on the part of managers to enforce discipline and nepotism/ethnicity, disciplinary measures are carried out to a low extent, discipline has influence on job performance of library staff and factors that militate against the adoption of disciplinary measures in the libraries, the respondents strongly agree to lack of policy, favouritism, corrupt leaders, ignorance of rules and regulations by staff, lack of management backing, inconsistency in carrying out disciplinary measures and interference from unions. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that: orientation should be given to staff, all stakeholders should be involved in the fight against the causes of indiscipline, every act of indiscipline should be given a matching disciplinary measure, disciplinary measures should be maintained in libraries in order to improve job performance and there should be a policy on discipline of staff which should be adhered to strictly without interference from individuals or unions.

**Keywords:** Discipline, Measures, Job, Performance, Library, Management, Influence, Indiscipline, Policy, Staff.

## **Introduction**

Libraries are made up of groups of individuals who work together to achieve organizational goals and objectives. These individuals are absolutely unique with different values, attitudes, characters, beliefs, ambitions and aspirations. They are committed to providing efficient and well managed services. The effectiveness of a library is to a large extent determined by the efficiency and competence of its staff. This could be achieved if the library does not have employees that exhibit negative and defecting behaviour that are unwholesome to the attainment of institutional goals and objectives. That is why Knight and Ukpere (2014) assert that individuals enter the workplace with their own unique abilities, attitudes, values and perceptions and this in itself can be a source of conflict in any organization. For this reason, there should be orderly conduct by the staff of the library who adhere to its rules and regulations. The act of adhering to rules and regulations is however referred to as discipline.

Discipline is essential for the smooth functioning of today's organizations including the library. Tumo (2017) citing Chelliah defines discipline as action or behaviour on the part of the authority in an organization (usually management) aimed at restraining all employees from behaviour that threatens to disrupt the functioning of the organization. It is one of the basic strategies of achieving effective job performance and the library's goals and objectives. The polytechnic library is an organized institution that has standards and policies to be followed by each employee. Going contrary to these amount to indiscipline. They may be in the form of lateness, absenteeism, going for unapproved studies, acts of insubordination among others. In circumstances where an issue arises about the conduct or performance of a library staff, it may be necessary to take disciplinary measures.

Disciplinary measures are taken by libraries to correct wrong behaviour and instill discipline. It is important to note that it has to be done in accordance with the law and the established disciplinary proceedings and must observe the rights to the library staff who are subject to the measure. Disciplinary measures can help the employees to become effective. Iheanacho, Edema and Ekpe (2017) submit that disciplinary measures though requiring that supervisors be consistent and firm may teach workers what is expected of them and they are used to develop workers with knowledge and skills to help them function well in the organization. The goal of the disciplinary measures is not to punish the library staff but it is to maintain effective job performance and achieve library's goals and objectives.

There are multiple types of disciplinary measures that can be employed in an organization which can enhance employees' job performance. They include warnings, dismissals, transfer, fines, counseling, reduction of salaries, withholding performance awards, demotions, suspensions, removal of certain privileges as well as denial of promotion for certain period (Engelbrecht & Strumpher, 2013). The disciplinary measures adopted by the managers notwithstanding, the reason is to let employees know that their performance is not up to the expected standard and to ensure effective job performance.

Job performance is very crucial to the survival of the organization as a result needs attention from both the employer and employees. Oyeniran and Akphorhonor (2019) consider job performance as an output of staff on the job measureable in terms of quality and quantity of job done. The various tasks performed on a daily basis contribute to job performance in general hence disciplinary measures are applied to ensure that rules are kept to ensure and encourage effective job performance. Nwinyokpugi (2015) maintains that if the employees do not comply with the standards, it is assumed that disciplinary measures

are enforced to improve their performance and maintain healthy relationship. Therefore there is need to look into the disciplinary measures adopted by libraries and find out how it affects job performance of library staff. It is against this background that this study on disciplinary measures on staff for effective job performance in polytechnic libraries in Imo State is carried out.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The following specific objectives guided the study:

1. To investigate the indiscipline practices displayed by library staff of polytechnic libraries in Imo State.
2. To identify the causes of indiscipline by library staff of polytechnics in Imo State.
3. To ascertain the extent disciplinary measures are carried out in the libraries..
4. To determine the influence of disciplinary measures on job performance of library staff.
5. To establish the factors militating against the effective adoption of disciplinary measures in the libraries.

### **Literature Review**

Workers who display unethical behaviour are said to be undisciplined. Indiscipline is a violation of the rules and regulations which is capable of affecting the performance of employees and the smooth running of the organization as a whole. In a library setting, indiscipline among staff is an act of misbehaviour that affects their performance. Thus, if the rules and regulations that exist in the organization are ignored or violated, the employee has poor discipline (Sarwani, 2016). Common indiscipline behaviours by employees may include lateness, absenteeism from work, dishonesty, illegal collection of monies from

students, drunkenness, negligence, insubordination, sexual immorality with students and co-workers and unapproved study leave with pay. Less serious cases of misconduct such as unjustified absence, late reporting after lunch, loafing and wasting time, and late coming are common in learning institutions. The serious cases of indiscipline are done under the influence of drugs and alcohol, assault and dishonesty (Grosset & Venter as cited in Ndung'u, 2017). These are serious threats which can affect their performance in the library. These are serious threats which can affect their performance in the library. These cases may demand use of formal disciplinary measures.

Indiscipline practices/behaviours are not without causes. Nwizu (2002) identified the causes of indiscipline as wrong placement of staff, undesirable behaviour of senior officials, discrimination, nepotism, lack of upward communication, incompetent leadership, lack of trust, improper framed rules and regulations, poor working condition, inborn tendencies to flout rules among others. According to Onah (2014) when salaries are not paid as and when due owing to late release of fund, such situations predispose staff for various acts such as absenteeism, lateness, indolence and other inaccurate attitudes to work all in the name of lack of money. Economic factors include irregular payment of salaries to workers and high rate of inflation. Socio-cultural factors such as ethnicity is a social phenomenon associated with interactions among members of different ethnic groups. Some library staff who are not from the ethnic group within the institution may feel dissatisfied with their work and have a feeling of rejection and alienation. Under the management factor we have laxity on the part of managers to enforce discipline, lack of proper enforcement of the role of the organisational ethical rules and proper motivation of the workplace. When the management

of the library do not consider the need, interest and aspiration of workers, it affects the levels of discipline among the workers.

Disciplinary measures are corrective measures adopted by organizations to make employees comply with rules and regulations. Every institution has disciplinary measures which provide basic practical guidance to employers, employees and the representatives and set out principles for handling disciplinary and grievance situations in the workplace (Wedaga, 2012). Employees who disregard policies and procedures are subject to various disciplinary measures. The success of disciplinary action at a workplace depends on the transparent and good corporate governance culture and practices present in the organization (Danku, Apeletey, Aboagye & Benyebaar, 2015). Discipline ranges from oral reprimand to immediate discharge depending on the magnitude/gravity of violation, employee status and whether it is a first violation or a recurrence (Ngulube 2002). Some disciplinary measures taken against erring employees in organisation are outlined by Iheanacho and Egwuogu (2015) as warning/reprimand, demotion to lower rank/grade, denial by promotion and annual increment, suspension without pay, punitive transfer, cash fines, dismissal/removal.

Alegbeleye and Idris (2015) maintained that oral reprimand, written reprimand, job transfer, layoffs or suspension, demotion, reduced compensation, de-hiring, discharging, offences against discipline, procedure at an inquiry, punishment, dismissal, desertion, interdiction are disciplinary measures adopted for erring staff. While Iheanacho, Edema and Ekpe (2017) stated that persuasion, issuance of query, warning letters and withholding of reward (reinforcement) have been identified as the most applied disciplinary measures in public service in Nigeria. On the contrary, Khatri (2012) opined that punishment is an

ineffective tool for disciplining employees because it is not constructive, it is an attack on the one who is punished and may cause resentment and frustration.

Maintenance of effective discipline is necessary in the achievement of an organisation's goals. Onah (2014) stated discipline deals with the level to which the employees of an organisation are able to conform, submit themselves to rules and regulations governing their conduct in the work place. Anugwom (2007) defined discipline as the use of rewards, punishments, force and other disciplinary devices to make sure that acceptable norms of behaviour are maintained in the organisation. Without discipline, no organization would prosper. Simatipang and Putu (2018) pointed out that the main purpose of discipline is to improve efficiency as much as possible by preventing and correcting the individual's actions necessary to support the smoothness of all organizational activities to achieve maximum goal. It is believed that discipline helps to teach responsibility and assist in correcting wrong behaviour. Alegbeleye and Idris (2015) asserted that discipline has some purpose which includes correcting the erred employee, re-directing of staff to the set objectives and to prevent future occurrence of such misdeed by either the affected staff or the prospective victim. They further maintained that one of the means in ensuring decorum, progress and effectiveness in organization is discipline. This implies that discipline is essential to maintain order and sanity in the organization as well as effective job performance. Every organization wants its employees' behaviour to be in conformity with the required system which it has prescribed in order to achieve the organizational goals. Thus, the purpose of discipline is to assist employees in changing their performance and behave sensibly at work so as to adhere to rules and regulations. Siagian as cited in Simatupang and Putu (2018) stated that discipline is a form of training that seeks to improve



and shape the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of employees so that employees voluntarily seek to work cooperatively with other employees and improve work performance. Hence discipline is internally motivated within the individual and depends on the state of mind of the individual. It is voluntary and an individual deliberately makes efforts to conform to an established code of conduct (Ngwokabuenui, 2015). Discipline not only sets the tone of work but also determines the rate of achievement (Tettey-Enyo as cited in Asare & Adzrolo, 2013). The effectiveness of disciplinary action depends to a large extent on the reasons and circumstances for its implementation (Laris, Thonhill & Sauders, 2003). Thomas and Brighton (2019) asserted that when one's behaviour is not in tandem with the set rules and regulations, disciplinary procedures should be enforced as a way of correcting the wayward behaviour.

The application of disciplinary measures in the library enhances effectiveness, efficiency, growth and goal achievement to the library (Dumusan, 2002). This is true because when disciplinary measures are utilized as it should be, workers in most cases are committed to perform their job well. Singh and Kaur (2009) are of the opinion that where there is discipline in the library, it encourages employee performance; hence workers will come to work early, be committed in their job, and perform their functions as it should be. Disciplinary measures help employee improve their performance. Ngulube (2002) opined that library staff will always be in good relationship with the library management when there is a good disciplinary measure. However, Vonai (2013) stated that library staff will achieve high productivity, commitment and effectiveness when there is a disciplinary measure in the library. Harvey (2003) supported by stating that high productivity in an organisation is a performance variable. When the employees are disciplined, they will

perform their functions well and as such will have positive impact on the income of the library and also make the library to have a good image (Knight & Ukpere, 2014).

Disciplinary measures are meant to reform unacceptable behaviours of employees in order to enhance their performance. Disciplinary action is usually initiated by management in response to unsatisfactory work performance or unacceptable behaviour on the part of workers (Tumo, 2017). Wedaga (2012) discovered that disciplinary procedures have a positive correlation on employees' performance if management tailors disciplinary procedure on employee performance driven goals. He further stated that if employees and managers see disciplinary actions as a punishment, it will have a negative impact on performance in the long run. Whereas Iheanacho, Edema and Ekpe (2017) maintained that there are significant inverse relationships between punitive measures by suspension, demotion and dismissal and organizational performance. This implies that the more the punitive measures are used in an organization, the less would be the performance of staff. Hence, suspension, demotion and dismissal are seen as punitive and not corrective measures and may create some negative impact on the performance of staff. Joe, Richard and Sanford (2011) discovered that punishment relates negatively with performance. This explains that punishment negatively affects job performance.

The adoption of disciplinary measures in organizations in general and libraries in particular is fraught with some challenges. Some factors militate against the enforcement of disciplinary measures in organizations. Wedaga (2012) revealed that the management faces some challenges in enforcing disciplinary measures such as inability of management to educate workers on disciplinary issues, inconsistency in the application of disciplinary

procedures and interruption by the union. Invariably, these factors go a very long way in affecting the extent of implementation of disciplinary measures in libraries.

## Research Methodology

The survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study is thirty (34) Heads of Departments in the five academic libraries studied. The instrument for data collection was an online questionnaire rated using the four-point scale. Out of the 34 copies of instrument sent, 28 were returned showing 82% return rate. Data generated from the study were analyzed using mean (x) scores. Items with values of 2.50 and above respectively were positively interpreted, while items with values below 2.50 were negatively interpreted. The benchmark for rating is Strongly Agree (SA)/Very High Extent (VHE) = 3.50 – 4.0, Agree (A)/High Extent (HE) = 2.50 – 3.49, Disagree (D)/Low Extent (LE) = 1.5 – 2.49, and Strongly Disagree (SD)/Very Low Extent (VLE) = 0 – 1.49.

## Data Analyses, Presentation and Discussion

**Table 1: Indiscipline Practices Displayed by Library Staff**

S/N	Indiscipline practices	SA	A	D	SA	Mean	Remarks
1.	Lateness	10	8	8	2	2.93	A
2.	Absenteeism from work	6	7	12	4	2.61	A
3.	Dishonesty	2	6	16	4	2.21	D
4.	Illegal collection of monies from students	5	4	15	4	2.36	D
5.	Negligence	4	9	11	4	2.46	D
6.	Insubordination	5	9	12	2	2.61	A
7.	Sexual abuse with students and co-workers	5	2	12	9	2.11	D
8.	Unapproved study leave with pay	2	6	12	8	2.07	D
9.	Drunkenness	3	1	12	12	1.82	D
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>2.35</b>	<b>D</b>

Analyses of data in Table 1 reveals that the indiscipline practices mainly displayed in the libraries studied are lateness, absenteeism from work and insubordination with mean scores of 2.93, 2.61 and 2.61 respectively. The respondents disagree with the other indiscipline practices as their mean scores are below the 2.5 criterion mean. The grand mean is 2.35 which imply that the staff of the libraries do not display indiscipline practices so much. This finding is in agreement with Grosset and Venter as cited in Ndung'u (2017) who identified common indiscipline behaviours by employees to include lateness, absenteeism from work, insubordination and others.

**Table 2: Causes of Indiscipline in the Libraries**

S/N	Causes	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
1.	Wrong placement of staff	10	9	7	2	2.96	A
3.	Nepotism/Ethnicity	7	6	11	4	2.57	A
4.	Lack of upward communication	7	14	7	-	3	A
5.	Incompetent leadership	10	12	5	2	3.14	A
6.	Irregular payment of salaries to workers	10	13	5	-	3.18	A
7.	Laxity on the part of managers to enforce discipline	6	13	6	3	2.79	A
8.	Poor working condition	9	16	3	-	3.21	A
9.	Natural tendency to flout rules	6	17	6	-	3.11	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>2.66</b>	<b>A</b>

In Table 2, it is discovered that all the respondents agree to all the items as the causes of indiscipline in the libraries as the grand mean is 2.66. Poor working condition ranked first with 3.21 mean score, followed by irregular payment of salaries to works (3.18), incompetent leadership (3.14), natural tendency to flout laws (3.11), lack of upward communication (3), wrong placement of staff (2.96), laxity on the part of managers to enforce discipline (2.79) and nepotism/ethnicity (2.57) mean scores. The finding of this study corroborates that of Nwizu (2002) and Onah (2014) who identified the causes of

indiscipline as wrong placement of staff, undesirable behaviour of senior officials, discrimination, nepotism, lack of upward communication, incompetent leadership, lack of trust, improper framed rules and regulations, poor working condition, inborn tendencies to flout rules and irregular payment of salaries to workers.

**Table 3: Extent Disciplinary Measures are Carried out in the Libraries**

S/N	Disciplinary Measures	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	Remarks
1.	Oral reprimand	15	12	-	2	3.46	HE
2.	Demotion to lower rank/grade	1	3	14	10	1.82	LE
3.	Denial by promotion and annual increment	4	5	11	8	2.18	LE
4.	Suspension without pay	3	4	9	12	1.93	LE
5.	Punitive transfer	1	7	13	7	2.07	LE
6.	Outright dismissal/removal	1	3	9	14	1.61	LE
7.	Issuance of query	13	9	3	3	3.14	HE
8.	Withdrawal of reward	6	5	10	7	2.36	LE
9.	Issuance of warning letter	13	8	4	13	3.11	HE
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>2.41</b>	<b>LE</b>

The result of the analysis in Table 3 shows that the disciplinary measures carried out to a high extent are; oral reprimand, issuance of query and issuance of warning letter with means scores of 3.46, 3.14 and 3.11 respectively. Other disciplinary measures such as denial of promotion, suspension without pay, punitive transfer, outright dismissal/removal and withdrawal of reward are carried out to a low extent. Generally, disciplinary measures are carried out to a low extent in the libraries as shown in the grand mean which is 2.41. This is in line with the display of indiscipline practices by the staff which is to a low extent. Nwinyokpugi (2015) maintains that if the employees do not comply with the standards, it is assumed that disciplinary measures are enforced to improve their performance and maintain healthy relationship but in this case whereby the indiscipline practices are carried out to a

low extent, one will not expect much disciplinary measures. The disciplinary measures mainly adopted agrees with Iheanacho, Edema and Ekpe (2017) who stated that issuance of query and warning letters have been identified as the most applied disciplinary measures in public service in Nigeria.

**Table 4: Influence of Discipline on Staff Job Performance**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
1.	It encourages employee performance	18	10	-	-	3.64	SA
2.	Fosters good relationship with the library management	10	11	4	3	3	A
3.	Leads to achievement of high productivity	12	16	-	-	3.43	A
4.	Makes the library to have a good image	16	11	2	-	3.61	SA
5.	Workers are committed to perform their job well	18	8	2	-	3.57	SA
6.	Leads to growth and goal achievement to the library	18	10	-	-	3.64	SA
7.	It has negative impact on job performance.	2	3	9	15	1.79	D
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.24</b>	<b>A</b>

The respondents strongly agree that the influence of discipline on staff job performance is that it encourages employee performance (3.64), makes the library to have a good image (3.61), workers are committed to perform their job well (3.57) and it leads to growth and goal achievement to the library (3.64). They also agree that it fosters good relationship with the library management (3) and leads to achievement of high productivity (3.43). However, they disagree that it has negative impact on job performance (1.79). The grand mean shows that the respondents agree that discipline has influence on job performance of library staff. Most of the items the respondents agreed with as the influence of disciplinary measures on job performance are in tandem with the ideas of Simatipang and

Putu (2018), Alegbeleye and Idris (2015), Knight and Ukpere, (2014) and Vonai (2013). On the contrary, the respondents disagreed with Joe, Richard and Sanford (2011) who discovered that punishment relates negatively with performance.

**Table 5: Factors that Militate against the Adoption of Disciplinary Measures in the Libraries**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Decision
1.	Lack of policy.	17	11	-	-	3.61	SA
2.	Favouritism	18	8	2	2	3.64	SA
3.	Corrupt leaders	12	12	4	4	3.64	SA
4.	Ignorance of rules and regulations by staff	8	12	6	6	3.07	A
5.	Lack of management backing	6	15	4	4	2.89	A
6.	Inconsistency in carrying out disciplinary measures	13	12	3	3	3.46	A
7.	Interference from unions	7	10	5	5	2.61	A
<b>Grand Mean</b>						<b>3.27</b>	

On the factors that militate against the adoption of disciplinary measures in the libraries, the respondents strongly agree to lack of policy, favouritism, corrupt leaders with mean scores of 3.61, 3.64 and 3.64 respectively. They also agree to the other factors such as ignorance of rules and regulations by staff (3.07), lack of management backing (2.89), inconsistency in carrying out disciplinary measures (3.46) and interference from unions (2.61). The grand mean of 3.27 indicates that there factors that militate against the adoption of disciplinary measures in the libraries. This finding supports that of Wedaga (2012) who revealed that the management faces some challenges in enforcing disciplinary measures such as inability of management to educate workers on disciplinary issues, inconsistency in the application of disciplinary procedures and interruption by the union.

## **Conclusion**

From the study, it has been discovered that at one time or the other, library staff tend to go contrary to the rules and regulations guiding the library in particular and the institution in general. This, if not handled well will affect the activities of the library and job performance of staff. Hence the adoption of disciplinary measures has been seen to have positive influence on the job performance of the staff. There is need therefore to ensure that the right disciplinary measure is given for an act of indiscipline and at the right time too so that the purpose will be achieved.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that:

1. Orientation should be given to staff to stop indiscipline practices that they indulge in and there should be close monitoring of those involved.
2. All stakeholders – government, school management, library management and library staff should be involved in the fight against the causes of indiscipline.
3. Every act of indiscipline should be given a matching disciplinary measure.
4. Disciplinary measures should be maintained in libraries in order to improve job performance.
5. There should be a policy on discipline of staff which should be adhered to strictly without interference from individuals or unions. This will also protect the staff who is carrying out the discipline.



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